

BASE MEAL

Roast Chicken with Creamy Polenta and Mushroom Ragout

Roast Chicken

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 2 hours 10 minutes (plus 15 minutes resting time)

7 lb roasting chicken

1/2 tsp Kosher salt

1/2 tsp garlic powder

1/4 tsp ground black pepper

1/2 lemon, quartered

4 cloves garlic, peeled and split in half

1. Preheat oven to 450°F. Season the inside and outside of chicken with salt, garlic powder, and pepper. Squeeze the juice from all lemon pieces into the cavity. Stuff cavity with garlic cloves and lemon pieces, then place chicken, breast side up, on a rack in a large roasting pan.

2. Roast chicken at 450°F for 10 minutes, then reduce heat to 350°F and continue roasting for 2 hours or until a meat thermometer inserted at the inner thigh reaches 165°F.

3. Remove chicken from oven and let it rest for 15 minutes before slicing. Cut 6 small slices of breast meat, remove skin, and serve (3 slices per person). After remaining chicken has cooled, remove and discard the skin, then wrap the meat and refrigerate until needed for other recipes.

Per serving: 141 cal, 3 g fat (1 g sat), <1 g carbs, 159 mg sodium, 0 g fiber, 26 g protein

Creamy Polenta

Prep time: None

Cooking time: 20 minutes

3/4 cup low-sodium chicken broth

3/4 cup 1% milk

1/2 cup water

1/2 cup uncooked polenta

1. Bring chicken broth, milk, and water to a boil in a medium saucepan.

2. Add polenta, mix well, and reduce heat so polenta is barely bubbling.

3. Continue cooking, stirring continuously, for 10 to 15 minutes or until polenta is tender and no longer grainy.

Per serving: 177 cal, 1 g fat (<1 g sat), 32 g carbs, 77 mg sodium, 2 g fiber, 7 g protein

Mushroom Ragout

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

2 tsp virgin olive oil
1/2 cup chopped Vidalia onion
1 clove garlic, minced
3 cups sliced white mushrooms
1 pinch Kosher salt
1 pinch pepper
1 pinch dried thyme
1/2 cup low-sodium chicken broth
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 Tbsp tomato paste

1. Heat olive oil in a large saute pan over medium-low heat. Add onion and saute for 3 minutes. Add garlic and saute for 1 minute. Add mushrooms and continue cooking until softened, about 5 to 6 minutes.

2. Season with salt, pepper, and thyme. Add chicken broth, Worcestershire sauce, and tomato paste. Mix well to combine.

3. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 5 minutes. Serve over creamy polenta.

Per serving: 95 cal, 5 g fat (<1 g sat), 10 g carbs, 180 mg sodium, 2 g fiber, 5 g protein

Cost per serving: \$ 5.98

MEAL 2

Chicken Panzanella Salad

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 10 minutes

1 small whole-wheat pita pocket, cut into sixths
Nonstick cooking spray, preferably olive oil
2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
1 Tbsp white wine vinegar
1/4 tsp sugar
1/4 tsp Dijon mustard
1 large pinch lemon zest
1 1/2 Tbsp virgin olive oil
1 pinch ground black pepper
1 cup diced cooked skinless white-meat chicken
2 cups shredded Bibb lettuce
1 medium tomato, cut into eighths
1/2 cup cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
1/4 cucumber, thinly sliced
4 thin slices Vidalia onion
1/4 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
1/4 yellow bell pepper, thinly sliced

1. Spray pita with cooking spray. Toast in a 400°F oven for 8 to 10 minutes, until golden. Set aside.

2. Whisk lemon juice, vinegar, sugar, mustard, and lemon zest together in a small bowl. Add olive oil and pepper; whisk well to combine. Set aside.

3. Place remaining ingredients in a medium salad bowl and toss with dressing. Crumble toasted pita into large chips. Add to salad, toss well, and serve.

Per serving: 356 cal, 14 g fat (2 g sat), 30 g carbs, 416 mg sodium, 7 g fiber, 30 g protein

Cost per serving: \$ 2.90

MEAL 3

Chicken Lettuce Cups

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 8 minutes

2 tsp peanut or canola oil
1/2 cup chopped Vidalia onion
1 1/2 cloves garlic, minced
1 1/2 tsp minced gingerroot
1/2 cup water chestnuts, drained and chopped
1 cup diced cooked skinless dark-meat chicken
2 Tbsp low-sodium chicken broth
1 Tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
2 Tbsp rice wine vinegar
1 pinch ground black pepper
2 cups cooked brown rice
2 scallions, thinly sliced
4 Bibb lettuce leaves, washed
1 tsp black sesame seeds

1. Heat oil in a large saute pan over medium-low heat. Add onion and saute for 3 minutes.

Reduce heat to low. Add garlic and gingerroot and saute for 1 minute. Add water chestnuts and cook 1 more minute.

2. Add chicken, broth, soy sauce, vinegar, and pepper; stir well. Add rice and cook for 3 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in scallions.

3. Divide chicken mixture equally among lettuce leaves. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve.

Per serving: 420 cal, 14 g fat (3 g sat), 48 g carbs, 371 mg sodium, 4 g fiber, 24 g protein

Cost per serving: \$ 1.87

MEAL 4

Curried Chicken Couscous

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

1 Tbsp pine nuts
2 tsp virgin olive oil
1/2 cup chopped Vidalia onion
3/4 cup low-sodium chicken broth
1/2 cup dry whole-wheat couscous
1/4 tsp Kosher salt
1/2 tsp curry powder
1 pinch cinnamon
1/4 cup tart dried cherries, chopped
1 cup diced cooked skinless dark-meat chicken
2 scallions, thinly sliced

1. Toast pine nuts in a 400°F oven for 2 minutes. Set aside and allow to cool.
2. Heat olive oil in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Add onion and saute for 2 minutes. Add broth to saucepan and bring to a boil. Remove from heat.
3. Add couscous, salt, curry powder, cinnamon, and cherries. Stir well. Cover and steam for 10 minutes.
4. While couscous mixture is steaming, heat chicken in the microwave for 30 seconds on 50 percent power until just warmed. Fluff cooked couscous with a fork. Add chicken, scallions, and toasted pine nuts; toss well.

Per serving: 454 cal, 14 g fat (3 g sat), 56 g carbs, 334 mg sodium, 12 g fiber, 28 g protein

Cost per serving: \$ 1.80

MEAL 5

Chicken Goat-Cheese Quesadillas

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 10 minutes

1 1/2 oz goat cheese, softened to room temperature
2 Tbsp shredded Monterey Jack cheese
1/2 tsp virgin olive oil
1/4 cup chopped Vidalia onion
1/2 cup frozen corn kernels, thawed
1 pinch ground black pepper
1/2 cup diced cooked skinless white-meat chicken
1 Tbsp chopped fresh cilantro
4 six-inch corn tortillas
Nonstick cooking spray, preferably olive oil

1. Combine cheeses in a small bowl. Set aside.
2. Heat olive oil in a medium saute pan over medium-low heat. Add onion and saute for 2 minutes. Add corn and pepper; saute for 1 minute. Add chicken and saute for 1 minute. Remove from heat, then stir in cilantro.
3. Divide cheese mixture and spread over 2 tortillas. Layer each tortilla with half the chicken mixture and top with remaining tortillas.
4. Spray a large frying pan or griddle with cooking spray. Warm quesadillas over medium heat for 5 to 6 minutes, flipping halfway.

Per serving: 361 cal, 14 g fat (6 g sat), 38 g carbs, 340 mg sodium, 3 g fiber, 21 g protein

Cost per serving: \$ 1.23

Bring this list to the store to snag all the ingredients you need for these five fab meals.

Produce Area

- 1 lemon
- 1 head garlic
- 2 large Vidalia onions
- 1 package white mushrooms (14 oz)
- 1 small piece fresh gingerroot
- 1 bunch scallions
- 1 head Bibb lettuce
- 1 medium tomato
- 1 cucumber
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 yellow bell pepper
- 1 bunch cilantro

Butcher Department

- 1 roasting chicken (7 lbs)

Dairy Section

- 1% milk
- Goat cheese
- Shredded Monterey Jack cheese

Pasta And Grain Section

- Uncooked polenta
- Brown rice
- Whole-wheat couscous

Canned Goods

- 2 cans low-sodium chicken broth (14 1/2 oz each)
- 1 can tomato paste (6 oz)
- 1 can water chestnuts (8 oz)
- 1 can cannellini beans (15 1/2 oz)

Bakery

- Whole-wheat pita bread
- 6-inch corn tortillas

Frozen Foods

- 1 bag frozen corn kernels

Miscellaneous

- Black sesame seeds
- Pine nuts
- Tart dried cherries

From Your Pantry

- Kosher salt
- Ground black pepper
- Dried thyme
- Garlic powder
- Curry powder
- Cinnamon
- Virgin olive oil
- Peanut or canola oil
- Nonstick cooking spray
- Worcestershire sauce
- Low-sodium soy sauce
- Rice wine vinegar
- White wine vinegar
- Sugar
- Dijon mustard